

GEORGE L. PLUMMER.

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MAY 24, 1898.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

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Mr. BELKNAP, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 3261.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, having carefully considered House bill No. 3261, respectfully report as follows:

This is a bill to remove the charge of desertion from the military record of George L. Plummer, now a resident of Montevideo, Chippewa County, Minn. It is shown by the records of the War Department that George L. Plummer was enrolled November 9, 1861, at Bradford, Me., and mustered into service, November 26, 1861, at Augusta, Me., as a private in Company M, First Maine Cavalry, to serve three years. He is recorded as having deserted at Augusta, Me., February 14, 1862.

On the 13th of May, 1897, Hon. James T. McCleary, M. C., applied to the War Department for the removal of the aforesaid charge of desertion, submitting among other testimony the following:

(1) Affidavit of George L. Plummer, dated at Montevideo, Chippewa County, Minn., as follows:

My true name is George L. Plummer. Under that name I enlisted in Company M, First Regiment Maine Cavalry Volunteers, about September 1, 1861, and stayed with my company all of the time until February 14, 1862. When with my company at Augusta, Me., my father came and took me home by force and without my consent and against my will on account of my age, I being a minor. About the 18th day of August, 1862, I ran away from home again and reenlisted in the same company and regiment under the name of George Rogers, in order to keep the knowledge of the facts of my joining the Army from my father. I joined the company at Antietam, Md. During my forced absence from the service my captain wrote to me and offered me a sergeant's place if I could arrange to come back, well knowing I had not deserted the Army. From the date of my reenlistment under the name of George Rogers, on August 18, 1862, I served continually with my company and regiment until the close of the war.

(2) Affidavit of John G. Fassett, of Minneapolis, Minn., dated April 9, 1897, as follows:

I was a member of Company M, First Maine Cavalry Volunteers, and I was personally acquainted while in the service with the claimant, George L. Plummer, who

was a member of the same company and regiment. I know when the claimant first enlisted at the age of 19 or 20 under the name of George L. Plummer, and as he was under age his father came and took him home before the regiment left the State of Maine, when the claimant reenlisted and came to our company under the name of George Rogers. I know from personal knowledge that George L. Plummer and George Rogers, the soldier, are one and identically the same person; that the claimant, George L. Plummer, and the soldier, George Rogers, of Company M, First Maine Cavalry, are the same person; that the true and correct name of said George Rogers is George L. Plummer.

(3) Affidavit of Charles F. Jewett, of Minneapolis, Minn., dated April, 9, 1897, as follows:

I have been personally and well acquainted with the claimant, George L. Plummer, from our childhood to the present time. I was a member of Company M, First Maine Cavalry Volunteers, during the civil war, and said George L. Plummer was a member of our company and regiment. I know from personal knowledge that George L. Plummer enlisted in Company M, First Maine Cavalry Volunteers, and as he was under age his father came and took him home with him. I know from general report at the time that said George L. Plummer reenlisted in said Company M, First Maine Cavalry Volunteers, under the name of George Rogers. At the time of his reenlistment and joining the company and regiment I was in the hospital, and was discharged from the hospital, and for this reason can not testify from personal knowledge as to the claimant's enlisting and serving under the name of George Rogers. While the claimant was in the service I learned from comrades of his service under the name of Rogers, and when he came home after his discharge I learned from him and others of the company of his serving under the name of George Rogers. I know as well as I can know anything that does not come from personal knowledge that George L. Plummer, the claimant in the above-cited claim, and the soldier, George Rogers, of Company M, First Maine Cavalry Volunteers, are one and identically the same person.

(4) Joint affidavit of Edward Jordan and George M. Brown, late second lieutenant and captain, respectively, of Company M, First Maine Cavalry, as follows:

I, Edward Jordan, late second lieutenant Company M, First Maine Cavalry Volunteers, aged 56 years, now residing at Bangor, Penobscot County, Me., do hereby certify that I was well acquainted with George L. Plummer, late a private of Company M, First Maine Cavalry Volunteers, who enlisted in the service of the United States to serve three years and was mustered as a private in Company M, First Maine Cavalry, Capt. George M. Brown commanding company, at Augusta, Me., on the 31st day of October, 1861. Plummer remained with the company until on or about February 14, 1862, at camp of the regiment, Augusta, Me., at which time he left the command and returned to his home at Bradford, Penobscot County, Me.; was reported as a deserter at the time, and was so reported on all returns and reports until the close of the war, in 1865. The desertion of Plummer was caused by the following circumstances:

When he enlisted he was not of age, and his father did not know where he was for several weeks after his enlistment. On or about February 14, 1862, Plummer's father came to Augusta and met his son outside the camp of the regiment and compelled him to go home with him, and he was kept in hiding until the regiment left the State of Maine. In the month of August, 1862, George L. Plummer ran away from home and enlisted under the name of George Rogers, and in the month of October, 1862, joined Company M, First Maine Cavalry, at camp near Sharpsburg, Md., and remained with the company and regiment under the name of George Rogers until he was mustered out of the service, May 29, 1865. Rogers served in the commissary department of the regiment for more than a year. About the time I was to go to Maine on veteran furlough, in February, 1864, he came to me and requested me while in Maine to see Adjutant-General Hodsdon and see if his record could not be changed and corrected on the adjutant-general's report. I went to Augusta, saw General Hodsdon, and stated the case to him. The General informed me that he could do nothing in the case; that Plummer must apply to the commanding officer of his company, and through him to the colonel of the regiment, and through the regular channels to the War Department at Washington. As soon as I returned from Maine I saw Plummer and urged him to make the application as directed by General Hodsdon, but he did not do so, stating as the reason that he expected to be appointed commissary sergeant, and if the colonel should learn of his former enlistment and desertion it might defeat the appointment. So nothing was done in relation to the matter, and Plummer received an honorable discharge from the service under the name of George Rogers.

Captain Brown, under the same date, adds to the statement of Lieutenant Jordan as follows:

I, George M. Brown, late captain and major Company M, First Maine Cavalry Regiment, hereby certify that the statement made above by Lieut. Edward Jordan regarding the enlistment into and deserting from Company M, First Maine Cavalry, by Private George L. Plummer is strictly correct and according with my remembrance of the case. I also know that he reenlisted and joined Company M again under the name of George Rogers. My promotion to major removed me from Company M, and I knew little of his later service.

In regard to George Rogers the War Department reports as follows:

The records show that George Rogers, aged 21 years, was enrolled August 18, 1862, at Bangor, Me., and mustered into service August 18, 1862, at Augusta, Me., as a private in Company M, First Maine Cavalry, to serve three years. He appears to have served faithfully until May 28, 1865, when he was mustered out of the service with a detachment of his company at Petersburg, Va.

From the foregoing affidavits and statements the Committee on Military Affairs is convinced that George L. Plummer and George Rogers are one and the same person, whose true name is George L. Plummer; that at the time of both enlistments he was under age; that his purpose in giving the name of Rogers in the second enlistment was to hide from his father the fact of his reenlistment; that under the name of Rogers he served faithfully for nearly three years and was honorably discharged at the close of the war. The fact of his return to the same company and regiment in which he originally enlisted shows his good intentions and the faith of his officers in him. It confirms his claim that his leaving the regiment was no fault of his. The record of desertion, therefore, does him an injustice and should be removed.

The application for the correction of the record of George L. Plummer, made in 1897 by Hon. J. T. McCleary, M. C., could not be granted by the War Department because Mr. Plummer's absence from his regiment exceeded four months.

In view of all these facts the Committee on Military Affairs, believing that the said George L. Plummer richly deserves to have his record corrected, report H. R. 3261 with the recommendation that it do pass when amended by adding after the word "discharge" in the last line of the bill the following:

*Provided, That no pay, bounty, or other emoluments shall become due or payable by virtue of the passage of this act.*

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